The Lions' Pride

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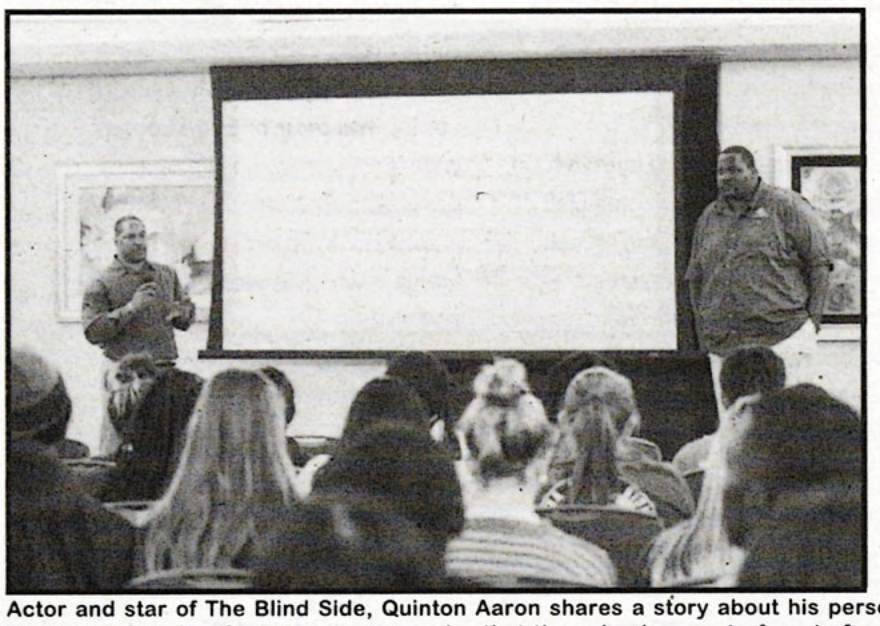
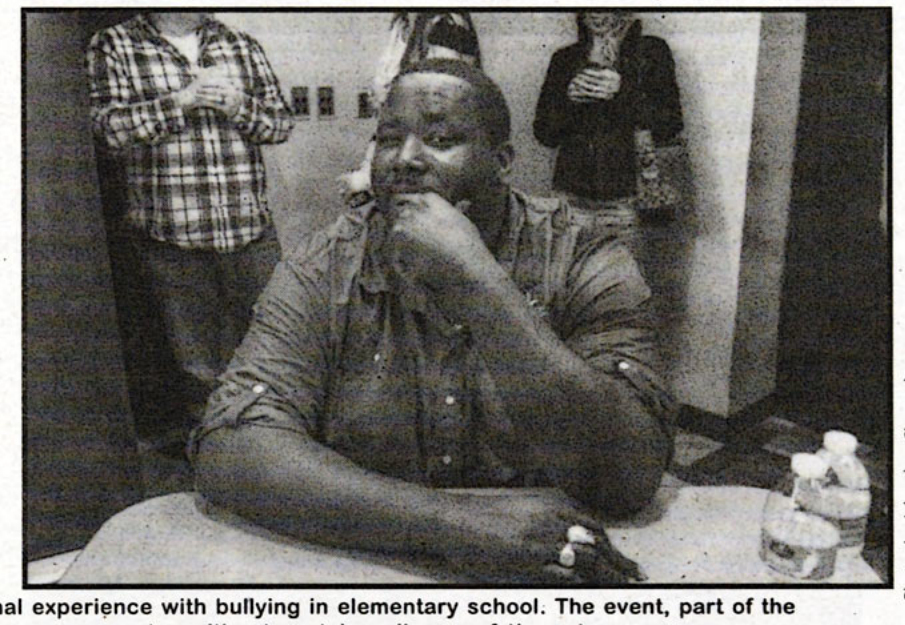
Quinton Aaron Comes to Inspire Saint Leo Students





Photos by Johnathan Shoemaker

Actor and star of The Blind Side, Quinton Aaron shares a story about his personal experience with bullying in elementary school. The event, part of the University Speaker Series, was so popular that the school ran out of seats for the eager guests waiting to catch a glimpse of the actor.

By Christine Bocchino
Contributing Writer

Applause resounded as the guest of honor walked down the aisles to introduce himself. "I'm Quinton Aaron...in case you didn't know that already," he humbly said over cheers.

As a part of the University Speaker Series, Quinton Aaron visited Saint Leo to speak about his anti-bullying foundation: The Quinton Aaron Foundation. Aaron is best known as the actor who portrayed Michael Oher in the 2009 box office blockbuster The Blind Side.

"I was always a character," Aaron said about his early love for acting. "I would get home and watch movies and pretend I was the characters."

Raised as a scrawny kid in the Bronx of New York, Aaron was bullied in elementary school. He used acting as an escape for the hardships he suffered.

"I heard every name in the book. I was beat up... chased," said Aaron. "I didn't know how to defend myself and I came from a rough neighborhood. I always knew it was going to end up with me on the ground."

Aaron was bullied up until he moved out of New York to Georgia during what he coined as his "Beanstalk Years," the time when he grew to 6 feet, 4 inches and 320 pounds.

"I think I was inhaling the fertilizer," he joked as he recalled the time in his life when he became the guy that everyone at school was scared to mess with. "I got jumped in 9th grade by four football players – it didn't end well for the football players."

Waving to acknowledge the police officer in the corner of the room, Aaron laughed as he continued on, clarifying: "I'm not violent, I'm a teddy bear."

(Nonetheless) Even still, the bullying shifted from physical to verbal in high school. As a result, Aaron turned to his best friend, his mother, for help. She encouraged him to show that their actions did not affect him.

"My mom got me through all that I went through in school," Aaron said. "[She] was my rock."

During the first year of the foundation, Aaron went on a 45-day tour in 66 different cities to speak out against bullying to students, parents, and faculty. Aaron continues to share his story throughout the country, promoting The Quinton Aaron Foundation with the intent of creating a healthy learning environment by uniting people against bullying in their communities.

"Some of the stories of the kids we visited – it brings tears to your eyes," Aaron lamented.

In an effort to engage with the audience, Aaron provided the crowd with the opportunity to ask questions; however, most people gave short accounts of their personal experience with bullying instead. An elementary student named Dallas was among them. David Tyler, the director of The Quinton Aaron Foundation, handed the young boy the microphone. Silence ensued after the "aww" of the audience, and Dallas stood-- frozen shyly-- atop a chair. His mother gently took the microphone, and spoke what was on his mind with the heartbreaking statement: "he wants to know if you have any advice for kids being bullied in elementary school."

Tyler led Dallas and his mom to the front of the boardrooms, where Aaron proceeded to reverse the child's somber look.

"Nobody's serious at that age; they're all joking," Aaron advised. "You know how to joke right? You got some knock-knock jokes?"

Dallas smiled, and the room lit up. Aaron encouraged the young boy not to take his classmates' mean words personally, but to tell his bullies to stop and go to a teacher if they continued to pick on him.

"The struggles we go through are for learning," Aaron said, building off his previous statement. Not only did Aaron learn from his experiences, he benefitted creatively. When he was cast for The Blind Side, there was not much studying he had to do to get in character. "The director told me to be myself. Take how you felt in the past and use it.'"

After completion of filming the movie, Aaron found success in sharing his experiences with others to raise awareness for the issue that is prevalent in every school in every part of the country. He is even the face of a new app, Censor Out, which allows people to filter what they see on Instagram and sends parents email alerts when cyber-bullying is detected on their child's social media account.

"It's going to take a village of us to come together and stop this issue," Aaron said.

It seemed that he had not even taken his last breath after the last audience question when his adoring fans swarmed to take pictures and get a big bear hug from the humble actor.

CHECK US OUT ONLINE!

Sunset Overdrive Review

Photo from @DualShockers Sunset Overdrive

Off Campus Housing

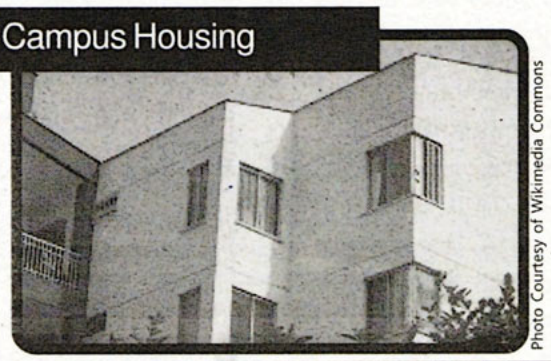


Photo Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Real Vs. Fake Sugar

Photo taken by Trejon Baynham

Local News

Camping: The Ropes to Having a Good Time in the Wild

By Austin Chiavaroli
Editor

With the weather being rather nice this year, many students and families are planning to go out into National Parks and forests to camp out and enjoy themselves. However, some individuals do not know what to bring with them while spending their nights in the wilderness. Most of these items are suggestion, while others are requirements. Obvious items such as a tent are not listed.

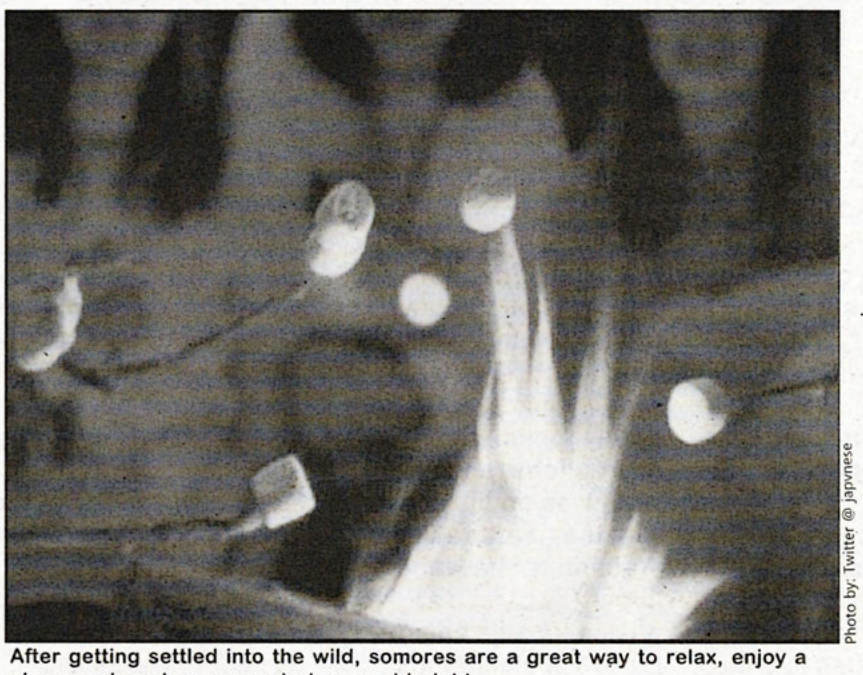


Photo by: Twitter @ japvnese

After getting settled into the wild, somores are a great way to relax, enjoy a nice snack and warm up during a cold night.

A Whistle and Compass;

Every camper should have a whistle around their neck and a compass in their pocket at all times. The woods are very hard to navigate through without a trail or map to guide you. If an individual gets lost, he can whistle for others to locate him or use a compass to find his way back.

A Sleeping Bag;

Though some may think sleeping in a tent is comfortable, it is actually quite unpleasant. The forest floor is full of twigs and branches that, unless swept from the area of the camper's tent, may become a nuisance when sleeping. With a sleeping bag the camper will be comfortable and the sticks won't prod as much when trying to get a nice and restful sleep. Also, it is good to have one in case the temperature gets too cold for some people.

Utensils for Cutting and Digging;

Some campsites do not have cut wood already prepared for campers or a fire pit. It is always good to keep a hatchet, saw, and shovel on hand when going camping for just these occasions. When using these tools, it is always a good idea to follow good safety precautions because they can be dangerous.

Gallons of Water;

Fire is very hard to control in a fire pit and, on very rare occasions, can accidently begin to spread. In an emergency like this it is best to have multiple gallons of water in the campsite, in order to put the fire out. It also is best to use the water to put out the fire in general when the campers are done using the fire pit. Water is a camper's best friend, as it is the best way to stay hydrated.

A First Aid Kit;

Accidents happen on campouts and campers can get hurt in multiple ways. Having a first aid kit is a requirement when going camping, just in case something unexpected happens. The first aid kit should contain bandages, gauze, moleskin or blister medicine, tweezers for splinters, aloe for burns, sutures just in case stitching is needed, and medical tape to keep the gauze on.

A Poncho;

Down here in Florida the weather changes abruptly all the time. With rain chances being high in this state, it is best to have a poncho just for that situation. Though rain shouldn't be that big of a problem, with cool weather it can cause sickness. Before going on a campout, it is a good idea to check what the weather is going to be like while at the campsite, letting the individual know what clothing to pack.

Eating Equipment;

Though some campers bring snack food like trail mix and beef jerky, others sometimes bring canned foods. Cast Iron pots and pans are great to use over the fire pit to cook food, and silverware is good to have on hand. To cook over the fire pit, make sure you have a proper fire grate for maximum safety, and also oven mittens as not to burn yourself.

Rope;

Though it is an odd item to have, rope can be used to do multiple tasks needed for camping such as helping tie down a tent, create a clothing rack, and tie around lumber too heavy to carry. It can also come in handy in a situation where it can be lifesaving, like needing to tie around a tourniquet.

Suitable Shoes and Clothing;

When on a camping trip, it is best to have clothing prepared for all kinds of weather or situations. Hoodies, sweaters, and pants can be worn when it gets cold at night or when it begins raining at the campsite. T-shirts, armless tees, and shorts should be worn when it gets too hot or whenever doing work in the camp, that way the individual does not get heat exhaustion or stroke. Boots are also a must when camping due to their protection against venomous animals and insects.

Flashlight;

When the sun goes down and the stars and moon come up, the only light normally in the campsite is the light of the fire. However, if the camper has a flashlight on hand they can light up anything in the site and more. Flashlights help in a major way to make sure the camper can see in front of them and also check for animals.

Pocket Knife;

The sword of the wilderness, a pocket knife is an important tool to have on a campout. It can help with cutting rope, cutting off decayed wood, and can be used as an eating utensil. The most preferred pocket knife is a Swiss army knife, as they come with multiple convenient tools. A good hobby to pick up with pocket knives is whittling wood into animals and shapes.

Entertainment Items;

These items, while not necessarily used for camping, can give campers something to do that doesn't involve the outdoors. Some of these items can include books, radio, and card games. Be careful not to lose these items in the outdoors.

Knapsack or Book bag;

Finally, there is the book bag where all the items listed are put into. The knapsack is normally carried whenever going hiking and keeps everything organized in small compartments. A lot of hikers carry their backpacks while hiking because it can be good exercise. The goal of a knapsack is to carry the necessities without overloading oneself. Any large items that have been brought along can be placed in a car if it is parked close enough to the site.

Camping needs a lot of preparation, even though others would only think to bring the clothes on their back and a blanket to sleep under the stars. However, having most of these items, a camper can then be more prepared for any situation and can have a more relaxing campout. For all of those who are going camping, have fun and be safe.

NEWSROOM

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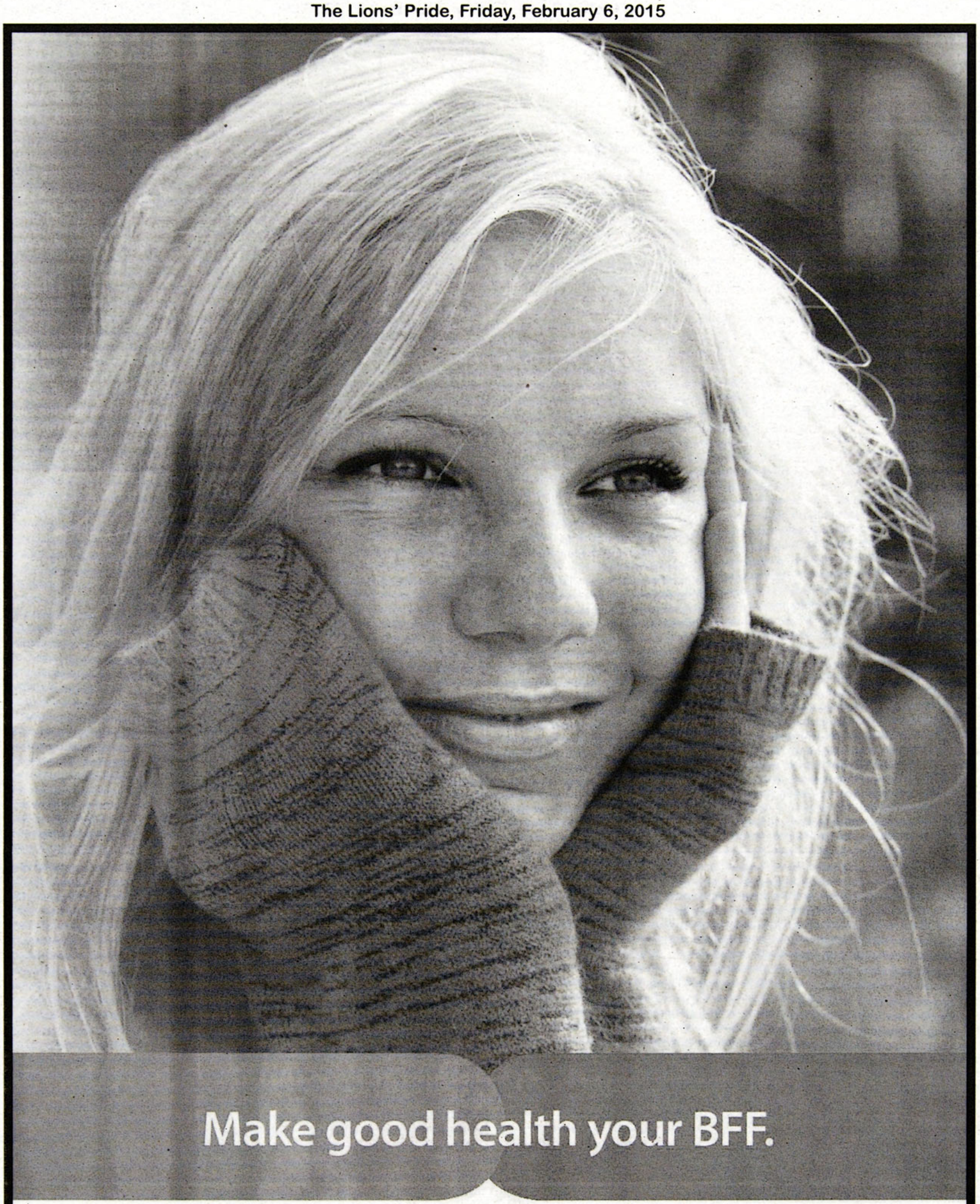

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10 Creepy Animals You Probably Didn't Know Existed

By Kristen Collins
Contributing Writer

The world is filled with all sorts of animals going from cute and cuddly to downright terrifying. When exploring the unknown depths of the oceans and scoring through uncharted areas, some of the most horrifying animals can be found. The following are ten creepy and unbelievable creatures across the globe.

Frilled Shark –

While the name may not seem too terrifying, this shark is not cute, frilly, or that much of a shark in appearance. A creature that rarely comes close to the surface of the ocean, the frilled shark is most likely responsible for myths of sea serpents in old sailing history. It is an eel-like shark with a lizard-shaped head, ruffles on its throat, and has a serpentine body ranging 3-4 feet with small fins.

These sea creatures are typically found in the waters near Japan, though have been found in other locations as well. In the wild, they live at water depths that range from 165 to 4,200 feet, though usually never stray from the deeper waters. Frilled sharks have a natural buoyancy, which means they can adjust their bodies for different water pressures, accounting for the wide range of habitable depths.

Goblin Shark –

Named by the Japanese as Mitsukurina, the goblin shark has uniquely terrifying features with a monstrous snout. Both the Japanese and English name are attributed to the fact that the shark's appearance is like a goblin with a long nose and jagged teeth. There are videos of the goblin shark eating in its natural habitat that show the jaw is able to extend forward to grasp its prey. It can grow to a length of 15 to 20 feet and can weigh up to 460 pounds.

These creatures are notoriously hard to find because they live in the deep sea around 4800 feet below sea level. Living in such a dark environment, the goblin shark has adapted by using their strange grey and pink skin to attract prey. The depths have also given these sharks electro-sensitive skin to make it easier to detect prey nearby. While the goblins of the sea may be harmless to humans, their diets do consist of squid and deep sea fish.

Black Dragonfish –

The black dragonfish is a creature deep within the ocean with a horrifying face, though it is only 15 inches in length. Like many types of deep sea fish, the male and female are completely different in physical appearance. The female is the image of creepiness personified with small beady eyes, a gapping jaw filled with razor sharp teeth, and a body as black as night. In order to attract prey in the darkness, the black dragonfish has a luminescent barb on the chin for unsuspecting fish. The male on the other hand is a minuscule 2 inches in length and only lives for the purpose to reproduce.

This specific species of black dragonfish is found in the northeastern oceans of Australia and is at a depth of 6500 feet. The complete lack of light and extreme pressures have made it so that these fish can create their own form of light, called bioluminescence. The pressure also contributes to the strange, slender and thin shape of the dragonfish.

Gulper Eel –

Staring into the infinite jaws of the gulper eel, wondering if it is smiling or going to eat every living soul is definitely on the list of creepy and horrifying animals. This creature seems to be made up of just a gigantic mouth. The mouth itself is pouch-like while the rest of the body is made up of a skinny tail. As for size, the gulper eel can reach up to 6 feet in length of fleshy, weak body and muscled jaw.

Located in tropical and temperate oceans, these eels are found in depths ranging from 500 to 6,000 feet. Like other deep sea creatures, they have small amounts of luminescent lights as well as ultra-sensitive spines/hairs on its body to detect prey. They feed mostly on small squid and crustacean in the same manner as whale, scooping up large amounts of water surrounding groups of shrimp and other prey.

Angler Fish –

Almost every child has seen the horrid face of the angler fish in all of its glory in the Disney film, "Finding Nemo." Vacant eyes, a mouth filled to the brim with teeth, misshapen body, and a deceptive beacon of light completely describes the entirety of this deep sea monster.

It is a thing of horror, ranging from 8 inches to 3.3 feet and weighing up to 110 pounds. Thankfully, these monsters are relatively small and are away from humans. Usually grey or dark brown in color, the angler fish's body mostly consists of a giant head, a mouth filled with translucent teeth, and has plain flesh. Its plain body makes it easier to capture prey that has been transfixed on the fishing pole-like dorsal spine. Both males and female are drastically different from one another: the female being the classic angler fish and the male being a small, parasitic fish.

The angler fish species live in the Atlantic and Antarctic oceans at depths going to 3,000 feet where the water is near freezing and there is an absence of light. Strangely enough, the angler fish is commercially fished around the world and is considered to be a delicacy in Japan. Creepy fish, but supposedly tastes like and has the same texture as lobster.

Shoebill –

At first glance these birds seem to be harmless and share the same appearance of the Skylofts in "Skyward Sword: Legend of Zelda." A closer look will show that it has a creepily similar appearance to a long-extinct carnivorous prehistoric bird known as the Terror Bird. Whether seen as a cartoon-like bird from a game or a dinosaur-age bird from the past, the shoebill is a bird that can hold its own against many of its prey and predators. This bird has an incredibly large bill with upcurving edges and a hooked tooth. It is both fast and powerful with its massive body, having a height of 3.6 to 4.1 feet with a wingspan of 7 to 8 feet.

The shoebill is located in Africa and prefers to live in swamp or marshy environments. They keep to more open areas to make flying easier and are generally solitary birds. Shoebills eat vegetation and a variety of animals: African lungfish, amphibians, water-snakes, lizards, turtles, young crocodiles, and Lechwe calves.

Aye-Aye –

The real-life gremlins of the world, aye-aye the creatures of childhood dreams with their disturbing, big-eyed faces haunting every corner. These rare primates have ridiculously creepy human-like hands with clawed tips, big and expressive eyes that take up the face, and large ears that are sensitive to sound. Specifically focusing on the hands, each finger is extremely long and spindly which gives a very gremlin-like appearance. Being either dark-brown or black in color, aye-aye have small bodies with disproportionately large tails. Head to body, they measure from 14 to 17 inches and with the addition of the tail, 22 to 24 inches are added.

Living on the island of Madagascar, aye-aye are tree-dwelling primates and avoid the ground most of their lives to keep away from predators. These creatures are also nocturnal, which can contribute to the fact that they have large eyes for better visuals in the dark. Their diets consist of fruits and insects found within the trees aye-aye inhabit.

Hummingbird Moth –

Seeing a cute and adorable hummingbird is always a sight to see...until it is actually a camouflaged moth. These insects look so close to a hummingbird that they are often mistaken for them, which helps in protecting themselves from predators.

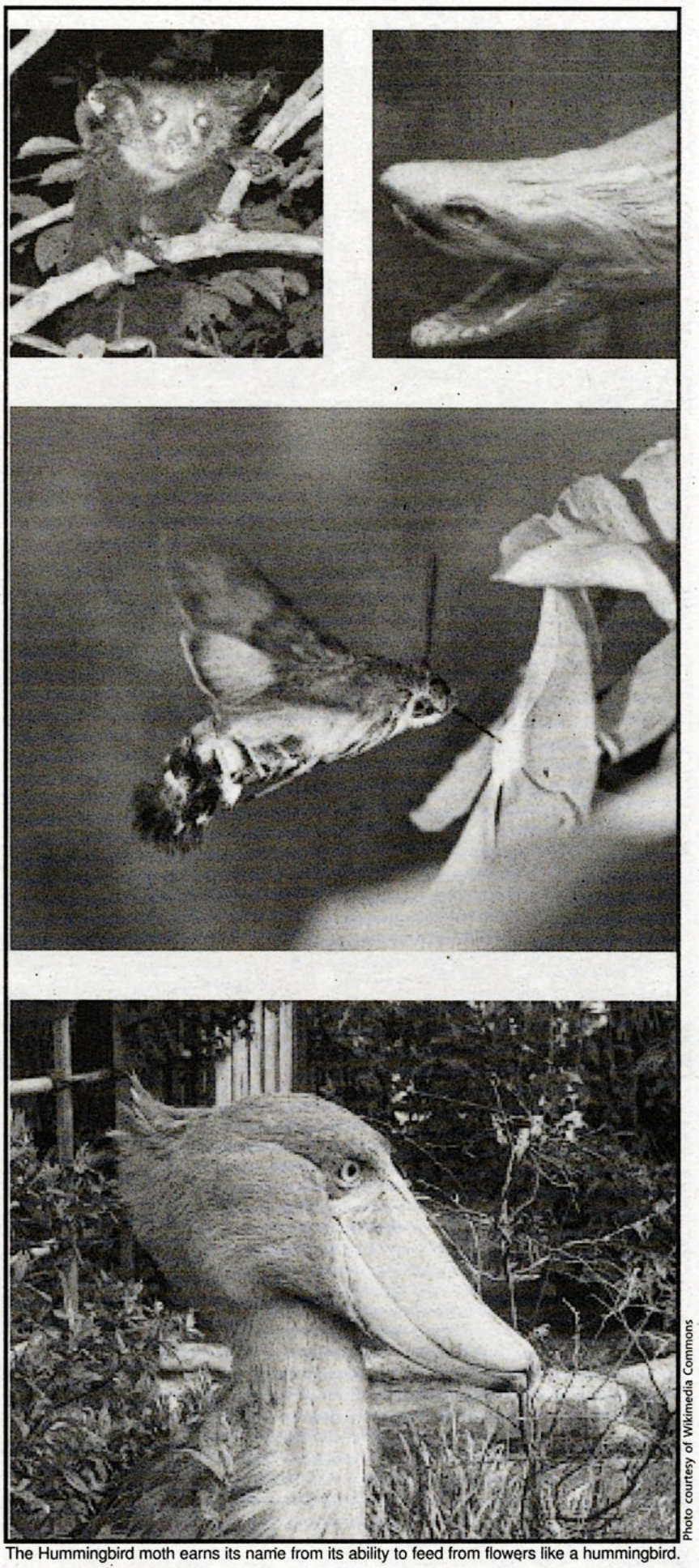

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

The Hummingbird moth earns its name from its ability to feed from flowers like a hummingbird.

The moth is 2 inches long and has an olive-green body with red bands. It has tufts of fur, posing as feather, and has wings that are clear with bits of red near the body.

The hummingbird moth lives in Japan and inhabits fields, gardens, and forest edges. Just like a hummingbird, these moths suckle nectar out of flowers from a tube-like mouthpart called a proboscis. Some of its favorite flowers to eat are the Japanese Honeysuckle, Red Clover, and blackberries.

Trogloraptor Spider –

Arachnophobia just blew through the roof with this newly discovered species of spider. The size of a dollar, the trogloraptor spider has primitive origins. The elongated claws are flexible and have teethed hooks of them to capture and hold live prey. Being primitive in origin, the spider has simpler uses with its web. It is used mostly for having a few strings to hang off walls.

The hook-legged spiders were discovered in an Oregon cave. There is speculations that these spiders hid away in caves before parts of the red forest disappeared or were destroyed. From its looks, behaviors, and survival patterns (the use of its webbing), it is obvious that the trogloraptor spider is a relic of old arachnid history.

Amblypygi –

Spiders, spiders, and more spiders of creepy and horrifying proportions comes about with the whip spider or the tailless scorpion. Amblypygi lack spider thread and poison sacks, but do have spider-like fangs. The size of these creatures bodies range around 2 inches, not too scary...until the first pair of legs are measured. At 9.8 inches long, these legs are used as touch receptors to catch prey nearby.

The whip spider is located in warm, humid regions and are usually found under bark, in leaf litters, or sometimes living in caves. Being an arachnid that hunts at night, the pair of long legs are essential to capturing prey in the darkness by using vibrations and chemical signals. While it has no form of poison, the two claws are used to keep their meal immobile as they pierce the soft tissues with spider-like fangs to drink the innards

Health

Having a Ruff Time?

By Amber Fink
Advertising Manager and
Editorial Page Editor

Most of the time when someone thinks of a therapeutic animal they instantly think of a dog, which is very true in many cases, but not all. A therapeutic animal is any animal that can be affectionate and comforting along with patient and tolerant with clumsy or rough movements, disability equipment like wheelchairs, interactions with other animals, and loud and sudden noises. Therapeutic animals can include dogs, cats, guinea pigs, rabbits, rats, horses, donkeys, llamas, alpacas, pot-bellied pigs and birds.

Animals have several mental benefits for their patients and owners. Animals are helpful when it comes to decreasing stress and anxiety, like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Therapeutic animals also decrease depression, loneliness, and aggressive behaviors. Therapeutic animals increases others feelings of acceptance, in-turn the ability to accept social and emotional support. They also increase socialization, mental stimulation, attention skills, and verbal interactions, self-esteem, in turn being more willing to be involved in-group activities.

Animals have several physical benefits for their patients and owners as well. Animals decrease blood pressure, heart rate and stress hormone cortisol. Animals increase hormones associated with health and a feeling of well being, like beta-endorphin, beta-phenyl ethylamine, dopamine, oxytocin, prolactin, and serotonin. Animals also increase levels of fitness by providing stimulus for exercise and improvement in fine motor skills, standing balance and wheelchair and other physical skills.

Therapeutic dogs are used in many places like hospitals, retirement homes, assisted living, hospice homes, nursing homes, schools, mental and physical therapy, reading programs, and disaster areas.

The first therapeutic animal was a 4-pound Yorkshire Terrier named Smoky. An America soldier found Smoky abandoned in a foxhole in a jungle in New Guinea. He sold it to Bill Wynne for $6. 44 to rejoin into a poker game. The dog was adopted by Bill Wynne who was serving with the 5th Air Force, 26th Photo Recon Squadron in New Guinea in 1944. Smokey was a typhoon and a 150 air raid survivor.

In hospitals the therapeutic dogs are a good way for patients and visitors to be distracted from any pain, suffering, or grief they may be experiencing at the time. The dogs will comfort the patients along with the family and friends anxiously staying in the waiting room. The patients are sure to follow strict sanitary guidelines, like using hand sanitizer, prior to handling the animals.

Mental and physical therapy is sometimes guided with animal-assisted activities (AAA) and is used to get involvement between their animal and the client. This is typically used in hospitals and retirement homes. Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is directed by a health professional that used the animal in providing their service to the client. AAT helps patients improve verbal and physical interactions with others, motor skills, mobility and balance, exercise, mental skills, anxiety, depression and trust.

Schools, Universities and Colleges just recently started having therapeutic dogs. They are primarily used to reduce stress and depression in students while studying, particularly for exams. Studies show that student interaction with therapy animals is a much healthier way to cope with stress instead of some other common means, such as binge drinking.

Reading to Dogs Programs is a way for children to read to others to help improve their reading, vocabulary and comprehensive skills, confidence and self-esteem. This technique allows them to learn and progress more. Dogs will not criticize the child's reading ability and therefore is less intimidating. This removes some of the negative connotation with reading in front of others.

Emergency response agencies have therapeutic animals for disaster areas. Often disaster victims shut down emotionally and stop thinking clearly. Interactions with dogs and other therapy animals can calm the victims. The emergency teams are trained for unpredictable and stressful environments.

There are many ways that someone can get involved and make a difference. One can register at http://www.petpartners.org/TAPinfo and join an organization. There are 3 organizations in Florida: Cherry Point Pet Partners, Suncoast Humane Society, and Tallahassee Memorial Animal Therapy.

Photo courtesty of Twitter @snoangel6650

Although dogs are the most commonly known therapy pet, horses are a popular animal among patients as well.

Photo courtesy of Twitter @UNMCCON

Students from UNMC help destress before a big test with the assistance of a therapy pet.

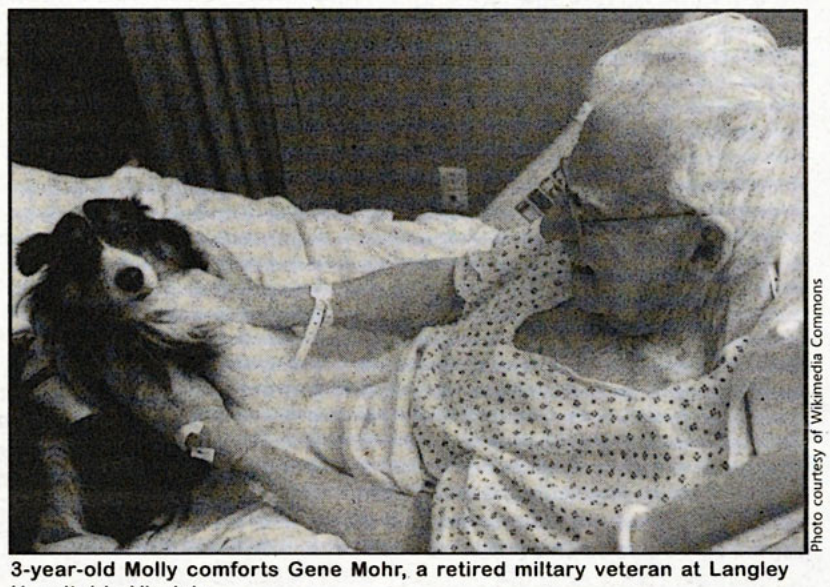

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

3-year-old Molly comforts Gene Mohr, a retired miltary veteran at Langley Hospital in Virginia.

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Arts & Entertainment

Sonic Boom: Rise of Horrible Game Design

By Austin Chiavaroli
Staff Writer

With Sonic being the main mascot of the famous gaming company SEGA, it is a shock to see a game this bad since the Sonic Teams experiment with "Sonic 0'6" in 2006. Developers Big Red Button have replaced Sonic Team alongside SEGA, creating the new Wii U game "Sonic Boom: Rise of Lyric."

The story of the game starts off with the main characters from the previous games and shows: Sonic the Hedgehog, Tails the Fox, Amy Rose, and Knuckles the Echidna. All four are chasing Dr. Eggman until they come across an ancient tomb hidden in the forest. While going inside Sonic accidently releases a snake-like being, from the race of ancients, called Lyric. Once released, Lyric plans on powering his army of robots with the Chaos Crystals to destroy anything that is organic in Sonic's world. It is now up to Sonic and the team to grab the Chaos Crystals before Lyric plunges the world into a desolate mechanic wasteland.

The gameplay is based on a formula that previous Sonic games have used. Each member of the team has a specific mechanic such as Sonic is fast, Tails can fly, Knuckles has better combat damage, and Amy hits enemies with her hammer. Apart from combative moves, there is also a new mechanic that has each character use an electric rope to help with solving puzzles and grabbing certain enemies in game. There is also currency that can be found in chests that help buy power glyphs which help with damage, rings, and other perks.

There are an abundance of issues with this game as many of the controls and camera angles are confusing and make the gameplay harder than it should be. The new character designs are disliked by many fans and the voice actors make them feel stereotypical. However, the biggest issue of the game is that there is no objective or map mechanic that tells the player what he/she is supposed to do and where to do it. With the game lacking this needed mechanic, the player might miss a cut scene and be oblivious to what he/she is supposed to do.

The main over world is bland as well. Characters are scattered across a world and with very little to do and there are even some graphical environments that look and feel unfinished. Even the cut scenes in the game show this as some of the lip movements don't match up to the characters and breaks between transitional frames are completely noticeable.

The game is based around the TV show of the same name, "Sonic Boom," making it feel as if it is just a marketable Sonic game to get fans and other players to go and watch the show as well. However, with the game not being well made, this makes the players not want to see how bad the show is either.

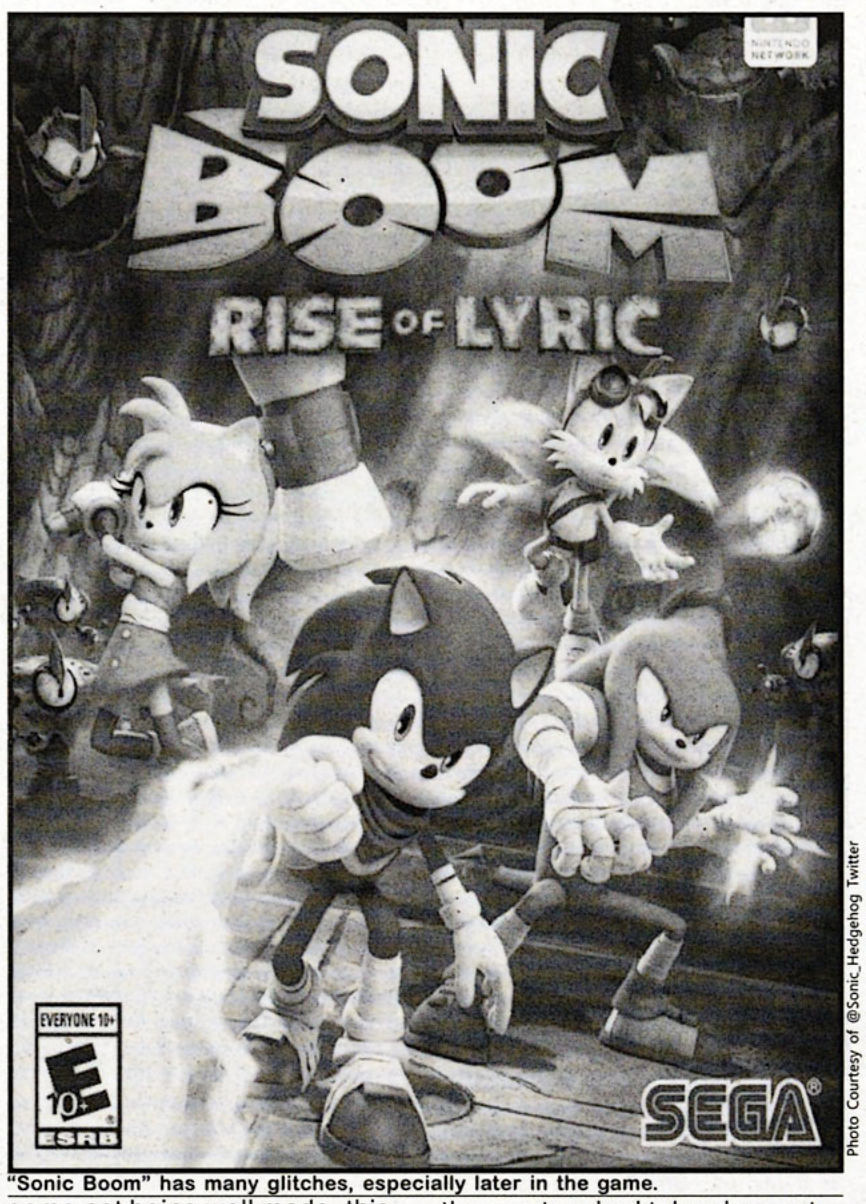


Photo Courtesy of @Sonic_Hedgehog Twitter
"Sonic Boom" has many glitches, especially later in the game.

This game is just a very horrible creation that feels as if it was never finished. The game could have been much better if the creators had taken longer to make the game and had kept it away from the TV series that this game is based around. This grotesque addition to bad sonic games gets a 1.5/5, definitely not something to buy for anyone.

Dude and Jude: Where is My Roomate?

By Wendy Legorete
Distribution Manager

Arts & Entertainment

American Sniper: The Psyche of a Soldier

By Austin Chiavaroli
Staff Writer

There are multiple American movies focused on the military and the hardships that the soldiers over in Afghan have faced. The latest one, "American Sniper," directed by Clint Eastwood, is a new story that shows how war can affect a soldier and his family. The movie is based off of the non-fiction account written by Navy Seal Chris Kyle called "American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History."

The story is about young rodeo cowboy, Chris Kyle (Bradley Cooper), who wants more out of his life. He decides to sign up for the U.S Navy Seals and begins his training. During his training he meets his future wife, Taya (Sienna Miller), and they marry after the devastating event of the September 11th attack. Kyle is then shipped off to Iraq as a Sniper for his unit, during his time over on the battlefield he kills multiple targets, making him a "legend." Though his fellow soldiers call him this, he is haunted by the thoughts of the soldiers he was unable to save in many instances. His wife becomes pregnant and Kyle is shipped back over into the states for a short period as his baby is born. Kyle then enlists for another tour of Iraq, is given a new head target, and it is now up to him to make it back home alive and finish what he has started.

This movie definitely shows how dramatic and almost addicting war can be to some soldiers. They can begin to worry more about their cause more than their own friends and family, which while being a good mind set to have in the military, is not a good one at home. The purpose of this movie to show this is a very just one, showing that even though soldiers can be told that their service is done, they can still have an itch to hold a gun again. The other purpose is to tell the story of one of the most successful sniper's in U.S. military history.

There are still issues with the film being very cliché as a war film, having the usual bombs and bullet shooting that most military movies have. Another issue is that some of the acting is not as good as it could have been with better casting, Sienna Miller sticks out to much as she isn't as believable as Cooper.

This movie is only fit for the right audience that it is aiming towards, those who love military films and awe inspiring tales of heroes. If you like any film in the genre of cinema then check it out for yourself. This movie is given the rating of 4.0/5.

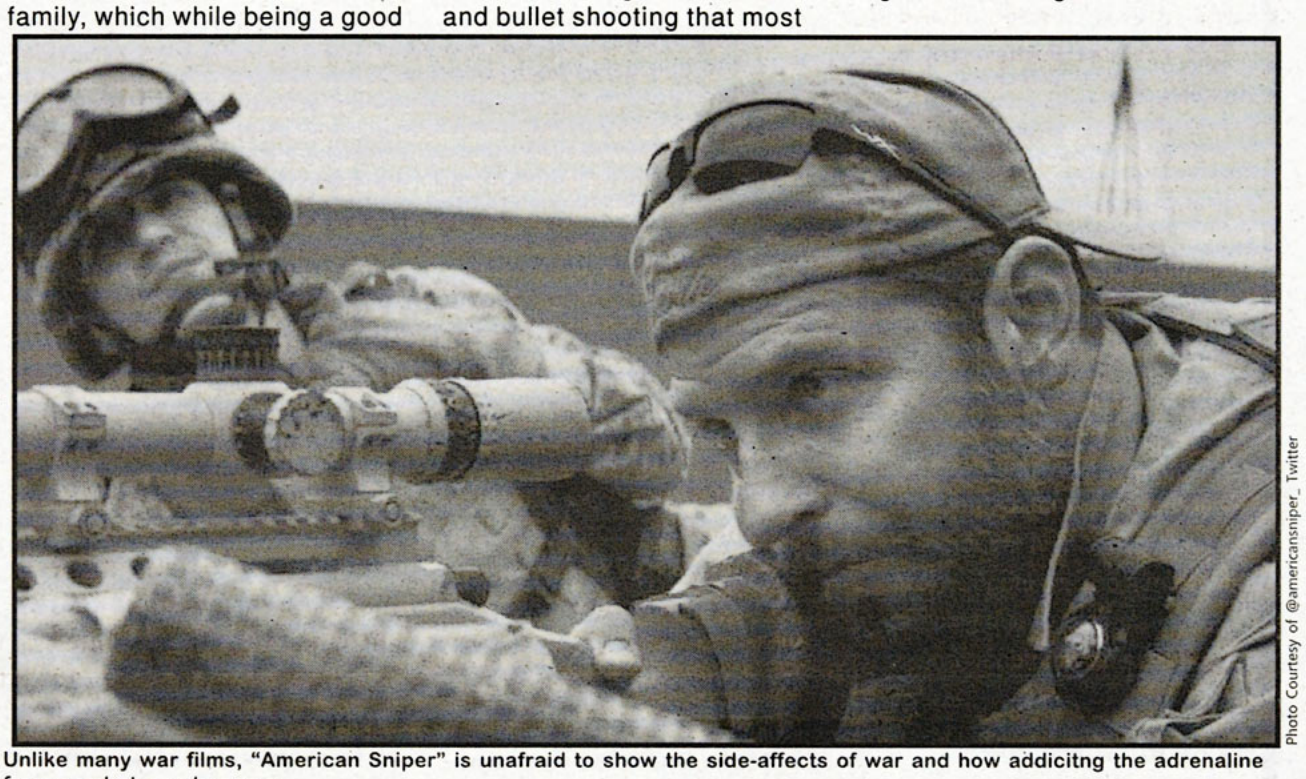


Photo Courtesy of @americansniper_ Twitter

Unlike many war films, "American Sniper" is unafraid to show the side-affects of war and how addicitng the adrenaline from combat can become.

A Wild Ride Through Life

By Annie Hays
Arts & Entertainment Page Editor

After a while action movies and romantic comedies can get tiresome and boring, and movie-goers need something different. "Wild," directed by Jean-Marc Vallée, is a movie that feels completely different from anything else in theaters, and has a strong female lead. It is very graphic, but the story grips the audience from start to finish.

The movie begins with a bang as Cheryl Strayed (Reese Witherspoon) loses her hiking boot on top of a steep mountain and angrily screams down into a ravine. This begins the series of flashbacks that tell the story of Cheryl's difficult life. The flashbacks come randomly and are not in chronological order, so the movie is difficult to follow at first. Eventually the audience is able to connect the dots and realize that Cheryl had an absent, abusive father (Jason Newell) whom her mother (Laura Dern) had to escape from. When Cheryl is a young woman her mother dies, and Cheryl becomes an addict and prostitute. She has been wanting to hike the Pacific Crest Trail her entire life, so in order to heal from her past mistakes she hikes the 1,000 mile trail from the Mojave Desert to Western Canada.

The movie definitely earned its "R" rating due to the explicit drug use, sex scenes, and cursing. However, the difficult flashbacks that Cheryl is plagued with are cut with stunning scenes of the trail. The contrast between memories of shooting heroin and hiking through spring mountain meadows keeps the movie moving at a fast and exciting pace. Unlike the flashbacks, the hiking scenes are in chronological order to stabilize the movie timeline.

Another stark contrast in the movie is the intense sadness and heartbreak Cheryl endures, and the stark humor in the movie. An early scene where Cheryl is trying to hoist up her unbelievably heavy pack for the first time is absolutely hysterical, especially since Witherspoon is such a petit woman.

The movie had strong feminist overtones, as Cheryl is able to overcome so much adversity and hike the Pacific Crest Trail as a lone woman. As a woman walking that trail, Cheryl has to be on guard for some less-than-savory male characters, and these scenes add even more believable drama to the plot.

The most refreshing part of the movie is its "realness." It is based off of a memoir by the real Cheryl Strayed, and no punches were pulled in making this movie. The raw anguish displayed by Witherspoon feels genuine, the realities of not showering or eating a home-cooked meal on the trail are shown, and the consequences of drug use are on full-display.

This movie is a must see for anyone who has been through hardships in his/her life, enjoys hiking, or just wants to see a great movie. I give this a 5/5.

Parts of the movie "Wild" were filmed in the Mojave Desert.

Photo Courtesy of @RWitherspoon Twitter

Sports

Team Cuts Hair for a National Cause

By Samantha Witte
Contributing Writer

Eat. Sleep. Play. Repeat. This is the sequence of events often used to describe the average day in the life of a student athlete. Then, on top of all of this, there is homework, and any other demands or challenges the day might bring along. These athletes all end up on the same intense schedule, and it is one that leads them to success. They all share a common goal, along with the motivation and drive to achieve it. No wonder there always seems to be a special sort of bond between the members of a team. They are linked together with passion. This type of bond is hard to understand from the outside looking in. These members become more than just teammates. They become a family.

One of these special tight-knit groups is the men's baseball team. They are a family with over thirty members, and each one is able to connect with another in this special way. It is often easy to pick these members out simply walking around the campus on a daily basis. Most of the time they are in some sort of practice attire or hanging out in groups. They are often outgoing, and they are very in touch with the community. All of these traits and looks are then put together to create that very unique baseball player look. It would be safe to say that each team creates various forms of unity among its members. This unity is then able to reach out to the community of Saint Leo, and then even further. As a result, a close and respectable community for all members can then be established.

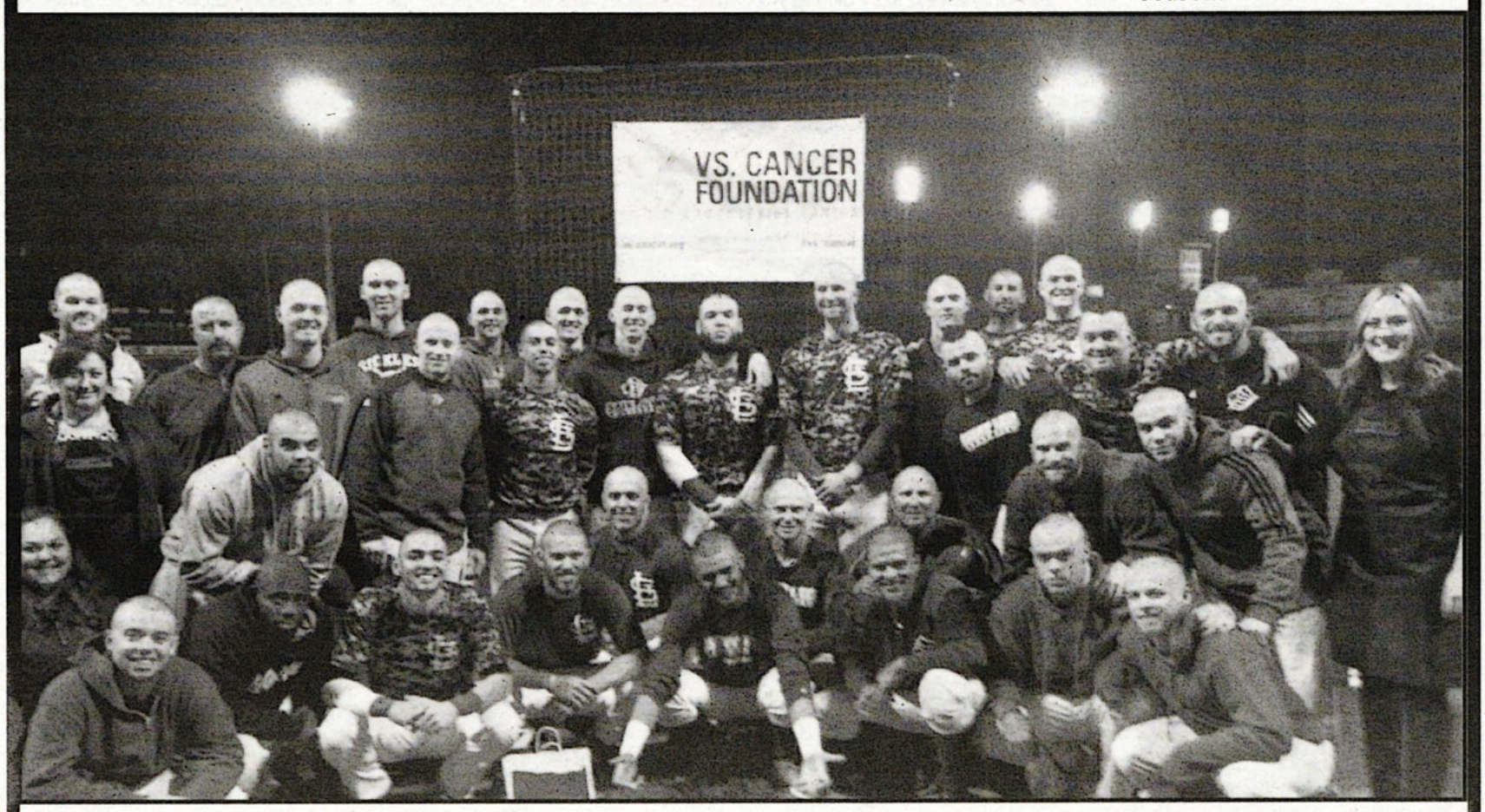
On the night of Jan. 28, the baseball team took the idea of mixing unity with the community to a completely new level. The team went to the field and participated in a very different kind of preparation for the opening weekend ahead. Many of them shaved their heads, adding to the list of similarities. The next day various students began to take notice and talk about the potential reasoning for this new look. One idea was that teams do it as sort of a pre-game hype to get ready for the upcoming season. Another possible factor was pure intimidation. The real reason was of much greater impact than baseball itself. They did it to raise awareness for cancer victims.

Often times people take for granted the life that they have been given, or the impact that they are able to have on other people. These boys already serve as role models to the community because of their athletic talent and their ability to represent Saint Leo well in a positive way. There are many young kids at the game, and many of them look to these players on the field wanting to be just like them one day. These kids get a hold of a glove or bat, and try to mimic every little detail that they can pick up from their idol. By shaving their heads for cancer, these boys were able to set an excellent example for anyone of any age that happens to take notice. It was an experience for these players that can reach out and touch all people in the community. It can help the community be aware of all that they can do to raise awareness as well.

"Everyone is touched by cancer in one way or another," said Dylan Harris, who was one of the hair donors.
Cancer has become such a common aspect of our society today, and it is a shame that many people have to face the prominent effects that it leaves behind. The boys have done an amazing job in lending a hand. They have already raised over $3000 for the Vs Cancer Foundation, which is the foundation that they are also trying to raise awareness for. It was founded by Chase Jones and is aimed at fighting back against childhood cancer. The team jumped at the opportunity when it was presented to them.

"Chase asked us if we wanted to get involved and it really was a no brainer," said Head Coach Sean O'Conner.
This whole organization is able to access and utilize their full potential on and off the field. Reaching out in a positive way to the community is truly what being a good role model is all about, and this group of boys have done just that.

Please help Saint Leo men's baseball to raise awareness by checking out the Vs. Cancer foundation and by spreading the word. Also, come support the team as they jump into their 2015 spring season.



The Saint Leo University men's baseball team is not the only college athletics team to participate in the Vs Cancer foundation's funraisers and fight against cancer. Schools all over the country have taken part in in the Vs Cancer foundation movement to shave heads to donate their hair to the cause.

Photo courtesy of @Dylan Harris Twitter